DIVINE MEDITATIONS ON ACQUAINTANCE With GOD.

BY

E. W. Eſquire.

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Omnis copia quæ non eſt Deus meus mihi eſt egeſtas.

LONDON,
Printed by *Thomas Maxey*, 1653.

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The Introduction.

WHen I first gave vent to these night Meditations by penning them, I had much debate with my self, whether to conceal or publish them were most comely and convenient; when I recollected the frequent prejudices that attend good meanings, and the great odium that is cast on serious men by those triflers, whose utmost ambition it is to blast the blessed fruit of Vertue, by their malbenign breathes of detraction, and how few there are of the Genteel World, that think any thing more poysie then Romances, worthy their perusal; I condemned it to the heap of wast Papers, as that which curious eyes would view with regret, and captious natures peruse with little calmness.

But for as much as I have hitherto often offended God, (I will accuse my self and humbly implore his pardon) in sacrificing by fire many (though not beauteous, yet undisfigured) children of my fancy, to silence, upon the Altar, and on the account of Modesty, or perhaps Seeurity, lest like unnatural Absaloms they should ryot against their Parent: My resolution for the future is, and by Gods help shall be, to preserve such blessings of God on my Studies as Memorials of his Mercy, and Excitations to my Gratitude.

In all earthly things there is change and sorrow, yea, the best Commodity our Nature trafficks in, sometimes brings home loss, or disquiet; there is a toyl in multitude

multitude of Books, and a kind trouble in common friendſhip; in the Favour of God only is Life, and in his Acquaintance Peace; the experience whereof made me methodize this Meditation, and now print it.

In the latter clauſe of the counſel to Job, *which moſt Verſions read by* Thereby ſhal good come unto thee, *or* So ſhalt thou have the beſt fruits, *or* So ſhalt thou have proſperity, *or* So ſhall good things happen unto thee, *or* So ſhall thy fruit be in good things; *or* In them is good increaſed: *I have rendred it,* So ſhall no evil come unto thee, *which I humbly conceive is pardonable, the peace of God in the former clauſe couching the good things of acquaintance with God; and alſo there being no good, truly ſo called, which this protection from evil comprehends not; for what ever defends us from the Fallacies of Satan, this world and our own hearts, muſt needs leave us in Gods Bleſſing, as meet Objects of his Mercy and Bounty. I will here conclude with this humble Petition to God, That he would pardon the temerity of my pen, and accept of my plea in* Ephraims *bemoaning words,* After I was inſtructed, I ſmote upon my thigh, I was aſhamed, &c. *Jer.*31.19. *And I truſt that he that* breaketh not the bruiſed reed, and quencheth not the ſmoaking flax, *will not refuſe this offering at my hand.*

October. 15. 1653.

EDW. WATERHOUSE.

DIVINE

MEDITATIONS ON ACQUAINTANCE WITH GOD,

From those words in *JOB*; 22 Job 21.

Acquaint now thy self with GOD, and be at peace, so shall no evill come unto thee.

IT Was a competent and congruous Definition of Man which the Philosopher gave, when he called him a sociable Creature, the nature of man being more receptive and sparsive of good then any Creature, which hath not reason to distinguish, and entertain what it knows to be usefull and conducing to content; for though all creatures have the imperfect and first lines of sociation effigiated on them, and in some degree, or

other affect their own ſpecies, or other creatures which either ſuite or ſerve to their ends; yet is no deſire ſo wiſely impetuous as that which originated from reaſon, is ſeconded by the aſſurance of unqueſtionable Experience; nor do we ſoberly believe any thing ſo undoubtedly, which hath not the probate of a cleer evidence, to the advantage of which the life of man (pleaſured by nothing more then generous and pious ſociety) is a clear and noble inſtance. That therefore Man, the Epitome of this Microcoſm, and the little Lord (next under his MAKER) of this glorious Pile of Divine Architecture, might not miſtake his match, *and while he ought to ſeek a Kingdom, find aſſes*; or by vain deluſions, and pretended nothings miſs the Mark of Eternity, and the Pawn of an unerring Conduct to that *Canaan*; This Scripture, like a goodly Glaſſe rightly modelled, and truly hung to a Chriſtians view, ſhews him the moſt reall and incomparable object of the Soul, illuſtrated from the Divinity of its nature, pure, unmixt, neither capable to be tempted or to tempt; unleſſe it be to a holy Love and happy Acquaintance, which ends not worſe, but better then it began, in temporall Peace, and in eternall bleſſe, abandoning evill either of *ſin or ſufferings*; all which are comprized in theſe Words, *Acquaint, &c.*

Me thinks my Meditations fix on a double ſort of ſubjects in this Scripture: *Self, GOD, Peace, Evill*; in their natures different, for what leſſe harmonius then corruption and incorruption, then good and evill, then the beſt we wiſh and the worſt we fear? yet both accorded and united

united in the Term, *Acquaint*. Man who ought to be linked to God by the bond of Love, as well as ſubjected to him by the Law of obedience (as he hath no adverſary to fear, ſo no good to deſire beyond that Monarch GOD: who is all to the ſoul by way of completion, and to the outward man by way of munition) by this means, may obtain felicity in *Acquainting himſelf with GOD*, &c.

There is ſo much Treaſure in this Scripture, that the rich Spoils of it are beyond the capacity of men to conceive, or Angels to language; I ſhall confine my thoughts to theſe enſuing Heads, as the Tracts by which to come to the Manſion of holy Comfort reſiding in it.

1. *What is meant by Acquaintance with GOD.* 2. *How it is to be attained.* 3. *What Peace it is that thoſe have which attain it.* 4. *How it may be ſaid to repell evill from us.* 5. *When this is to be ſought after; Theſe diſcuſſed, will enodate the obſcurity, and preſent the bleſſing in its true and Princely Dreſſe.*

OF the Firſt (*Acquaintance with GOD:*) I ſhall ſay in the Pſalmiſts Phraſe, *Glorious things are ſpoken of thee*, O thou light ſprung from on high, thou ray of eternity, to which all mortall contents and Mundane confederacies are but as atoms, yea non-entities. *Acquaintance with God* is ſomwhat ſtupendious, and requires a touch from the Altar to decypher it; 'tis a beam of glory darting on the face of a Child of glory; Pſalm 87. 3.

a Love-token erranded to ſignifie the good will of him that dwels in the Buſh, to his that are among the pots, ſlurred amongſt the brambles, ſcratched; in the fire and in the water, abuſed debaſed, but not forſaken; but this is rather an effect of it then a Deſcription of it, that which forms it is the being, and that which expatiates it is the wel-being of it: For the more this grace (for leſſe it is not) is meditated upon, the greater are the touches of ſweetneſſe in the Souls viſage, from this lovely Penſill of the moſt lovely Artiſt, GOD: And therefore I ſhall conceive it to aſcend its Zenith by theſe Gradations.

Step. 1. The loweſt and inchoate ſtep to this Mount is the *Underſtanding*, that muſt know him the chief good, or elſe it will never deſire him; mans intellect is the Bucket by which he drawes, and the Ladder at which he climbs to will and wed; the object he knowes good, without this 'tis as impoſſible to love and obey, as without eyes to judge of colours, or without taſte to diſcriminate Liquor and Meats, God hath given the priority to this faculty as that which muſt ſeaſon to, and prepare appoſitely for the reſt. And truly, this is of the foundation and reall nature of the rationall ſoul; for from this are we determined to be worthy (as to other creatures) of that Supremacy and juriſdiction God hath given us over them; for did not our Underſtandings direct us to a carriage proportionate to the natures of Creatures, and things, we ſhould ſoon diſcover our follies to be too brutiſh either to be admired or followed, and the Creation would ſoon renite obedience to ſo ſenſleſſe Governours. But bleſſed be God,

he

he hath not left us without a witneſſe of his liberality. He hath informed our ſpecious bodies with perfect ſouls, and made a noble Lodging of State for himſelf, that high room, and top battlement, our Underſtanding; which though too vaſt to be filled with the little puncto's and contemptible grains of worldly nothings, yet receives completion from God, and thoſe apprehenſions of him which he (in much condeſcenſion to us) is pleaſed to vouchſafe us, not to make us proud of our fatneſſe, but provident to improve fulneſſe to gratitude, and to ſerve him more compleatly; who does good and is good, and from whom goodneſſe effluxeth to all creatures: for of his fulneſſe they receive fulneſſe.

That this Underſtanding is the Key of Diſcovery, and *Acquaintance*, needs no ſecond to confirm it; for even nature tels us by the Rule, that there is no deſire of what we know not, and Scripture directs to this as the path to all gracious Intercourſe with God; in one paſſage of holy Writ I hear this aſſerted, *They that know thy Name, will put their truſt in thee*; in another, *He that cometh to GOD, muſt believe that he is.* Now effects imply cauſes, as Ciſterns do Springs, and Rivers Seas: If God be to be believed on, he muſt be conceived of, and underſtood by thoſe that thus believe him; for as articulation is conſequent to generation, ſo is adhæſion to aſſent, and aſſent to intellect.

Ignoti nulla cupido.

Pſal. 9. 10.

Heb. 11, 6.

The neceſſity of intellect to head the will and affections, which in a ſort compleat acqaintance, is evincible from many things: from the order of God in Creation & Nature, which makes this as the

womb, at which port every thing which tends in its progresse to action, enters. The light natural, typicall of this internall Luminary, was the first Creature; as that which God erected to give light to his Library, the World, which God compiled of nothing, by a power eternal, complete, and indeterminable; and the first tryall hee put man upon, was to touch his Intellect, and to try the magnetisme of that faculty, which could draw all things to it, and incorporate it self with every thing: And if when there was no distortion, if before the mis-rule which sin and Satan brought into the Understanding; this was the tendency of that Faculty; It must still remain what it was, as to the Nature and sacred Design of God, though vayled and denegrated by accessions of sin, and contractions of punishments, which by understanding any thing but God, and in order to God, is just upon it.

The faculty then is the same in its nature, in its imployment; onely the Rose hath prickles, the Swan deformed legs: *Death is in the pot*, if God doth not heal the waters, and turn our Understandings to that right object, Himself; *whom to know is life eternal*, And whom to glorifie as God, our most excellent and onely good, is the sole end of our creation.

Nor is the order of God in Creation, the only Instance of this precedence of the Intellect; but experience attests this in the whole latitude of Instances, the Heavens; by that instinct they have, as it were, and after their kind, do their duty to earth, Man, nay their Maker; by a duct (which to them is in stead of Intellect) do they serve times and seasons,

ſeaſons; do they remit, and extend influence, according to the law of their firſt Cauſe; and the Birds and Beaſts, by their ſenſual Energy (*analogous* in ſome ſort to Intelect in man) direct their courſe, and run their race; not attempting to love or flye that which is not Good or Evil in their eye, and pleaſing or diſpleaſing to their Natures. Now if that rule of the Schools be true, which neither is yet, nor ever will be contradicted, That the work of Nature is the work of the God of Nature: then what is the concurrent practice of Univerſal Nature, according to its ſpecifick being, muſt be Poſitive and Abſolute, and ſo from him who is the Beginning and End of all things, and therefore moſt true. And ſo I have mounted the firſt Step, the *Underſtanding*. Acquaintance imports Underſtanding; for how ſhall Deſire be heightned, but from Knowledge; and Knowledg be gained, but by that Faculty, which is admiſſive and receptive of it? *How can they* (ſaith S. *Paul*) *believe on him of whom they have not heard? and how can they hear without a Preacher?*

Opus Naturæ eſt opus Auctoris.

Rom 10. 14.

Nor is this Step conſummative to our Acquaintance, if here we ſtay, pitching this as the *Non ultra*, beyond which we will not go: for God hath placed his Seat on High, and the Rounds of the Ladder which reacheth him are many; he will have us engaged in much colluctation, many breathings and pantings, before we come up to the Mount of Mercy, where Peace is, and Evil is not; and therefore he cryes out to man, in the *ſecond* place, for his *Heart*, his *Will*, which is the Jewel in this Cabinet of Glory: This, this to the Intellect, is as the Sailes to the Ship; takes the Winds gales,

Step 2.

and carrys it to the Port of Loſs or Gain: this, this is the Womb in which are the Iſſues of life and death: this, this is the Paradiſe, which we ought to guard with the *Flaming Sword* of an uninterrupted and earneſt Zeal; for as the Sailes move the Ship, by reaſon of the wind which acts upon them, and ſo is cauſal of their ſwelling, as they of the Ships motion; and according to the quantity of the wind, ſo ordinarily is the way of the Ship: ſo doth this act upon the Intellects premiſes, admitting whatever hath the Watch-word from that Centinel. I ſay not, that the Will alwayes followes the rectified Underſtanding: but this I ſay, No man wills what is evil under the notion of evil, for the Wil and Good are convertible; and many greateſt evils have ſome good in conjunction with them, for which they are admitted, though as to the predominant parts of them, they deſervedly be termed and judged Evil; for whatever erreth from the perfect Rule of Gods Law, and defaceth the Image of God in the ſoul, hath not the allowance of Heaven to make it currant.

Bonum & velle convertuntur.

Now this Will of man is highly concerned to the completion of reaſonable Actions, it being the *vehiculum* which carries the Intellect to its Object, and thereto unites it: the Underſtanding approves the Match, but the Will tyes the knot and adunates; as I muſt know before I can will, ſo muſt I will before I can be acquainted with that I will; which is the reaſon why between things averſe there is no acquaintance properly ſo called, but rather an Antitheſis and Retrogade Motion; Contraryes meet not, nor cohabit they in intenſe degrees, in the ſame Subject at one and the ſame time,

time, becauſe they are inconſiſtent, and are made what they are by the non-being of each other: Fire is no fire, if water prevail againſt it, for it is ſuppreſſed and led captive by the Victor; and ſo water ceaſeth its moyſture and liquidity, if the heat of the fire accede it to Maſtery; whereas other things that are not at this variance, meet like Mercy and Peace, and kiſs each other: Active heat, and Paſſive moiſture, make way for Generation; Steel and the Load-Stone are in amity, and do with eagerneſs approach each other; ſo is it in Love, by the will diſpoſed of to any object. There is no Soveraign more abſolute, as to things ſubjected to his will, then the will of man; for it wheels about the *totum mobile* in him. This moved *Samſon* to love *Dalilah*, *Archimedes* to dye with his Art; *Judas* to betray his Maſter, *Julian* to Apoſtatize; and by Gods ſeverity, this ſeals, as the meritorius Cauſe, the wicked under unbelief, that they *may be damned who have pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs*: for this once perverted and engaged, the whole man is circumferred and hurled after the genius of its project: by this are the affections alarm'd and keened to good or evil; and without this Velliety is nothing feaſible, without the power of God come to aid; yea, and that too deales mildly, by a ſweet compulſion and inſuperable perſwaſion, transforming the ſoul from what it is, and as corrupted, would; into what it is not, but ought to be: ſubmiſſive *to*, ſequacious *of*, and voluntarily captived *by* God. 2 Theſſ. 2. 12.

Now all the quarters of the inner man are beat up, and Proclamation is made in the name of the great King of Heaven: now the word is, I am not what

what I was, *Other Lords have had dominion over me,* Isai. 26. 13.
but the desire of my soul is to thee, and to the remem- ver. 8.
brance of thy Name: now there is this only outcry,
None but Christ, none but Christ.

That is the second Step, and the Advance is great. Acquaintance is in a good progress, when we understand the worth, and will that worth to be acquainted with. But there is more Marches to be made to this Conquest; therefore the 3d. Step *Step* 3. is Discovery of this Desire to that Object we love; and this, though in regard of Gods Omniscience needs not, *For he knows our thoughts afar off*; yet Psal. 139. 2. in order to our Obedience, and his declared Will, ought to be done by us again and again; the Ca- Matth. 7. 7. non is, *Ask, and ye shall have*; *seek, and ye shall find*; *knock, and it shall be opened.* 'Tis a minute trifling boon that is not worth asking; God hath entailed Bliss to our Prayers and tears, not as the price, but the way to them: as he *hides not himself from his people that pray*; so doth he not own them that look big with the Pharisee, and have too stiff knees to bend before him. He *knowes the heart is* Heb. 2. 4. *not upright*, when it is unhumble, and condemns it as a false Character of a good heart not to ask Dost thou (O man) conceive God the best Good, and thy self miserable without him, and wilt thou not seek by Prayers and tears to gain freedom? Dost thou think he *will ever be waiting to be gracious*, who ought to be waited upon because he is, and will be still so, unless thou provoke him to turn his back, and not his face? Thou art *blind*, and wilt thou not ask Eye-salve? *Naked*, and art Rev. 3. 18. thou too sturdy to beseech Christ to cast his Garment of Salvation upon thee? If thou canst

not,

not *confeſs thy ſins*, he declares not himſelf a *Forgiver of ſins*; for his fidelity is engaged only to Penitents. Will any man thats worthy, put his friendſhip upon an unwilling party, or motion amity but upon the requeſt of him, whom thereby he ſhall oblige? It becomes thoſe that will have part of anothers propriety, either to beg or purchaſe it: all the Coyn in thy purſe, and the pride in thy heart, will not capacitate thee to gain God for thy friend upon any termes, but *repent and believe*: Theſe are the wedding Garments which bring thee into the *Feaſt of fat things* with approbation; and if thy holy Motions be as eager as they ought, and as thy acquaintance with God deſerves, then thou wilt not find a repulſe; for thy God is ready to meet thoſe with open armes, who offer their ſervice to him upon bended knee, and with abaſhed faces. 1 John 1. 2, 9.

Step 4. to Acquaintance with God is his Word, his Servants, his ways. *God is known by his outgoings in his Sanctuary; the Scriptures teſtifie of him; his ſecrets are with them that fear him.* If any man be a ſeeker of God, him he hears. But above all, be ſure of the favour of the Well Beloved; he that comes from his hand, is carryed into the Bed-chamber, and refreſhed with the good things of his right hand. Chriſts bloud croſſeth the Roll of Indictments, and diſchargeth the guilt: If thy ſoul be dipped in that bloud, it will hold colour againſt all waters, againſt all aſſayes to interpoſe; perhaps Satan puts in his plea, and informes, thou art his; What though? a ſtronger then he hath taken poſſeſſion. Suppoſe thy ſins reſt upon thee as upon *Mary Magdalen*; yet if thou *loveſt* *Step* 4. Pſal. 77. 13. John 5. 39. Pſal. 25. 14.

much

much, why ſhouldſt not thou hope to be forgiven, as was ſhee? There is no ſin in Mortal man can outpoiſe the mercy in an immortal God; nor the merit of a ſpotleſs Saviour, whoſe blood in value out-prizes them as far as the nobleſt Gemme doth the moſt vulgar pibble. To this bounteous *Emanuel* (who when he was Rich became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich; who when he was in the boſom of his Father, came to converſe with men, that he might elevate men to communion with God in Grace, and compartying with him in glory) do thou (O holy ſoul) conjoyn thy ſelf by a Covenant never to be broken. He, he it is that ſoders God and man, that gives thee *acceſs with boldneſs to the Throne of Grace*, that moves thee to good, confirms thee in it, rewards thee for it, by the Holy Ghoſt, which the Father ſends in his name. Is thy Peace begun and perfected, thy Comfort continued and encreaſed? in the aſſurance of this, thou wilt live a life of good example to men, and of glory to God, and after all, *reach the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus*. For this *honour have all his Saints*.

Phil. 3. 14.
Pſal. 149. 9.

And the better to keep thee in this, leſs and lower to that better good, it becomes thee, O man, to attend on the revealed Will of God, that bears witneſs to the Truth, Mercy, Juſtice, Patience, and other Holy Attributes of the Divine Nature; it records alſo what thy duty (O man) is, namely, *To fear God and keep his Commandments*, not only becauſe he is angry with the wicked every day, but becauſe he by his love conſtraines thee, and expects no returnes from thee but thy ſelf:

Eccleſ. 12. 24.
Pſal. 7. 11.

Own

Own him in all his holy Counſels, Precepts, Threats, Ordinances, Servants, and love whatever bears his Image and Superſcription: Follow *Peter* in his tears and Faith, not in his frailty and abnegation; thy Saviour is thy Lord, and thou oughteſt to own him for ſuch, as well on the Croſs, as on the right hand of Glory; and his ſervants ought to be as dear to thee, when they are tormented, perſecuted, afflicted (provided they be ſtedfaſt, and ſuch as ſuffer for well doing, on whom the Spirit of Glory reſts) as when applauded, preferred, and crowned; for this, if thou doeſt, enterance will be made thee into Acquaintance with thy God, whom to know, is to be wiſe; and whom to live with, is to be happy.

Step 5. to Acquaintance with God, is identity of mind: therefore the Apoſtles ſays, *Let the ſame mind be in you which was in Chriſt Jeſus*: not the ſame eſſentially, but the ſame diſpoſitively, the ſame effectively; wiſh (in a holy ardency and warrantable impatience) that you could oblige God as much by ſervice, as he doth you by Creation, Preſervation, and the good things of Glory, which he promiſeth; yea, rather wiſh to be like him in Grace and Holineſs, then in Greatneſs and Puiſſance: There is nothing works Acquaintance ſo kindly and reaſonably, as congruity; the Proverb is, *Birds of a feather will flye together*: there is natuly a kind of Magick in aſſimulation; we love Climates and Cloathes, Books and Meats, Faces and Faſhions, proportionable to our Geniuſſes moſt; and the exterior ſenſe is much at the Devotion of the interior idea, and the fanciful Formatory: *Step* 5. Phil. 2. 5.

Did

Did you ever see contrarys agree while so? and not rather their friendlineſs bubble up from their union, as one prevayling, forced the other into complyance? Or can it be imagined that God and man ſhould agree, while the one is too great to have equal, the other not humble enough to own a Superior? In wordly converſation there is nothing more diſtaſted, and declines Acquaintance, then contrariety of Principle; yea it often invites to hatred and hoſtile procedures, even where naturally there is antitheſis to contrariety, and altogether an ignorance of any demerit in the object, ſaving this nude inconformity.

All Compounds are made of Simples that ſerve in their conjunction to the propoſed end; and though numerically they differ, yet *in coagulo* they conſpire to ſerve one univocal Deſigne. In building, crooked, ſtraight, long, ſhort, little, great, ſappy, hearty Timbers conforme to the model of the Edifice, and the Surveyers Art. In medicines, ſimples laxative, retentive, hot, cold, by a kindly, and even cooperation, recover health, and honour the Phyſician; which otherwiſe would diſcredit the one, and endanger the other: the like effect hath compleaſans in friendſhip, which is a marriage, not of Sexes, but minds; not to purpoſes of Generation but Converſation. And therefore thoſe miſtake the Mark much, who think to reduce God to their bounds, his holy nature to their impure practices, and will be acquainted with him, not upon his own, but their own termes. If they may have a *Dalilah* in their lap, if they may keep their right eye and right hand, if when they go into the houſe of *Rimmon* they may

be

be pardoned, well and good: they are contented to enter amity with God. But if he commands to *cut off the right hand*, and *pluck out the right eye*: Matth.5.29. if he call to them to leave their Country, *to come* Gen.12.1. *out of Babylon*, to forsake father and mother; then Rev.18.4. with the rich man in the Gospel, they go away *heavy*, crying out with him, *Non tanti emam pœnitentiam*: to these, *Gadarens* Swine are beyond Christ, glass before pearles, and this little world in *view*, more precious then that better in *promise*. Matth.19.22.

Well, but Acquaintance with God is never the worse becaus these covet it not but upon cheap and dishonourable termes, which wil not be yeilded unto. Those that know what it is to have the eyes of their Understanding opened, to converse with God, not remotely (but as mortal Nature by Divine indulgence) may *with open face, think all* 2 Cor.3.18. *things loss and dung in comparison of* it; accounting themselves never estranged from the true end of their being, but when they are without the Vail, when the lines of their inheritance are not cast out to them in this lot of love, when they wander in the Wilderness of the wolrd, and commune not with that God, whose comforts are above the world, who is whatever earth and heaven can yeild admired: for he is all in both, and nothing in either is delectable, but what he is; nor are we ever truly our selves, but when we are like him, in that partaking of his Divine Nature, which our being is capable of, and his blessed purpose hath designed us to.

Last Step to Acquaintance with God, is assiduous attendance on him: fits and gird, now and then visits *Last Step.*

ſeldom amount to intimate friendſhip, thoſe intervals and faint treatments, like cold and indigeſted Meteors hang hovering, but never condenſe, and body into any ſolidity, like dainty meats which rather puff up then feed; or like gay clothes, which adorn more then comfort Nature: The greateſt ingredient to many mens friendſhip, is a Cap, or a Congee, Your humble Servant, and Paſſionately yours, which wiſe perſons eye as the purliew in which the Raſcal Deer moſt ly, the Nobler rarely; and therefore uſe thoſe Modes rather in Symphony with the plurality, then out of allowance and choice. Many in the matters of God, and in Duties of Religion (whereby we ſhould acquaint our ſelves with him) are as fetchant and wavering, as theſe in leſs conſequentials are: they wait not at the poſts of Wiſdoms door; they come not early, they go not to bed late; they eat not the bread of ſorrow, that they might purchaſe this one thing neceſſary: Earneſt they are not, nor do they by a holy impetuoſity and violence ſeiſe on Heaven, not wraſtle with God, not let him go til he bleſs them with his Acquaintance; yet do they expect to partake of God as fully, as *Zachary* and *Elizabeth*, who *wait upon him daily, and walk in his Commandments without reproof*; but how vainly theſe expect grapes from thornes, and figs from thiſtles, the Conſequence ſhewes; God keeps them at diſtance, he feeds them with the huſks; he loves thoſe that fear him, not *formidine pœnæ, ſed virtutis amore*; and he values thoſe higheſt who are moſt importunate, undiſmiſſable, whom not a *non decet* will diſcourage from *begging crumbs*; whom no Moment, no company will diſhearten from

Mat. 15. 26, 27.

from resolving with *Job*, *Though thou killest me, yet will I trust in thee.* These are the Merchants our Lord speaks of, who sell all to purchase the Jewel of Divine Intercourse; these are they that cry out for the *light of Gods countenance*, and care not what they suffer so they have it. To these humble prostrates are the Doles of Heaven dealt out, on these that cry out, as *Rachel* did to *Jacob*, *Give me Grace, or else I dye*, doth God give the blessing of Acquaintance, and for these and these only hath he a Reserve, a Mansion in his Kingdom, *Jerusalem* above, which is the vision of Peace; and in the fruition of which, by holy Acquaintance with God as the way and means, we shall obtain adunition to God, as the end and fruition of Peace in that felicity, for so saith the next words, *Acquaint now thy selfe with God, and be at peace.*

Job 13.15.

Psalm 4.

But stay man a while, There is somewhat intercurrent 'twixt Acquaintance and Peace, there are bars and bounds to keep the Stage free from pester. God hath appointed Means and Degrees, by which to come at length to this Culmen, this top of the Mount on which shall be our Transfiguration: Christ *Moses* and *Elias* are to be met with when we can say our Christian Alphabet roundly, when we can say, not only as Saint *Paul*, *Nondum attigi metam*, but sing that *Epinichyon*, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, for thou hast redeemed us from sin, sorrow, the world, and made us Kings and Priests to thee.* Till then, there is *aliquid agendum*; if ever thou wilt come to the end of thy race, it must be by the Means ordained to that end, which is the second Scruple to be explicated. 2 *What are the Means*

Phil. 3 12.
Rev. 5.9, 10.

Scruple 2.

Meanes of obtaining this Acquaintance? The Solution of this is partly done in the foregoing Conſideration, and therefore will require the leſs anſwer here; the preſcribed Steps of aſſent are alſo many ſeveral Paces towards it; what is neceſſary to be added by way of Illuſtration, is only this; God requires of every Acquaintance, 1. *Reconciliation to Chriſt*: 2. *Reſignation to his holy Spirit*: 3. *Adoration of his Ordinances*: 4. *Admiration of his Works*. 5. *Renovation of life*.

I. 1. *Reconciliation to Chriſt*: All ſin is Hoſtility againſt him; 'tis Rebellion againſt the Prince of Peace, and folly againſt him the Wiſdom of the Father: He came to unite God and thee, and thou (O man) laboureſt the Defeat of his advent; the end of his deſcent from Heaven to earth, was to draw men after him; thou in ſtead of *coming to him that thou mayeſt have life*, runneſt away from him: in ſtead of caſting down thy ſelf at his feet and craving his pardon, thou holdeſt up Weapons of unrighteouſneſs againſt him: Is this thy kindneſs to thy friend? Is this thy Loyalty to thy Prince? Is this the Badge of Acquaintance and friendly intimacy? Doſt thou crown Chriſt with *thorns*, and expect he ſhould *kiſs thee with the kiſſes of his lips*? Doſt thou deliver him to the Corſs, and lookeſt from him for a place in *Paradiſe*? Do theſe rough hands of *Eſau*, deſerve from *Iſaak* any Bleſſing? O man miſtaken, erring thorow the Deluſion of thy Proſpect, and the Temptation incumbent on thy heart! Return, and ſeek to him by tears, whom thou haſt provoked by Treachery, crave his blood, thine Attonement, which thou haſt ſhed in triumph to thy Luſts; thou haſt made him

John 5. 40.

him thine Adverſary by ſin, humbly proſtrate thy ſelf as his Purchaſe and Penitent: Let him ſee thy tears trickle down thy tender cheek, from a penſive heart, and a gracious eye, that now lookeſt upon thy ſelf with greater ſcorn, then ever ſinfully thou didſt upon him, when wickedly thou ſaidſt, *I will not have this man raign over me*; and let no hour, day, moment paſs without ſome earneſt Petition for Reconciliation, That he would ceaſe to be what thou haſt deſerved; thine Upbraider, Accuſer, ſevere Judge: and be what he hath promiſed to all that turn to him with all their hearts, *an Advocate, a Load-ſtone, the Way, the Truth, and the Life*: An Advocate, to plead thy Cauſe; a Load-ſtone, to touch thy heart; the Way in which; and Truth by which thou ſhouldeſt walk; and the Life to crown thee after thy work done.

But perhaps thou concludeſt thy ſelf at too great a loſs to recover, too far out of favour to be reingratiated? Why ſo? *If where ſin abounds, Grace ſuperabounds*, there is hope for thee: Beſpeak not (O man) thy denyal, do not ſtay thy career towards heaven, becauſe thou feareſt the door of Grace is ſhut. Such Concluſions may hinder thy endeavour, they cannot add to thy comfort; therefore covet in the ſecond place, the *Holy Spirit* to thy *comfort*; entertain him kindly, grieve him not by reiterated ſins; quench him not by averſe obſtinacy, *An neſcis (anima) te verecundum habere ſponſum?* This holy Dove ſent from the Deity, brings the Olive Branch with him; the Peace is bought by Chriſt, but the Spirit ſeals and applies the Purchaſe; the Salve is rare, but works not kindly, except that hand layes on the Plaiſter:

Rom. 5. 20.

2

therefore reſign thou thy ſelf to the Spirit of God, let him rule in thee, and by his Steerage be thou acted; follow this Star, it ever leads to Chriſt; hearken to his voice, it is *vox dilecti*, its a calm, ſweet, lovely, lightſome voice; be raviſhed with this Muſick, which with *Hyper-Syrene* notes, charms moſt wiſely; give up thy ſelf, ſoul and body to this Beſieger, that ſummons thee to deliver up the ſtrong Holds of Sin and Satan to Chriſt the King of Saints, and the Savionr of his Body the Church. Make no terms with him, the Holy Ghoſt will not be tyed to Articles: He is free to intercede, and thou muſt be free to render: as he will have good quarter, ſo gives he ſure comfort. The ſoul that receives him, is Scot-free from Terror and Fear of Divine diſpleaſure, for this Gueſt ſecures his Quarters; yea, the power of the Almighty overſhadoweth thoſe with Grace, whoſe hearts are prepared to cry, *Veni Spiritus Sancte*. And till (O man) this be thy temper, thou art as unfit for Acquaintance with God as for Heaven; of which it is a real Type, and to which it is the *Baptiſt*: for as into Heaven fleſh and blood, *quà* ſuch, cannot enter; ſo into familiarity with God can none be admitted who have not the Teſt of this Comforter, who never beares witneſſe that they are the ſons of God, who reſt unreconciled to Chriſt, unreſigned to him.

But how may theſe Graces appear in me, may the ſoul ſay? God, Chriſt, and the Holy Ghoſt have their Court in Heaven, I am in the Valley of *Bochim*, in the frigid Zone of earthly vanities, where duſt and aſhes, wormes, and no men, live, and

and acclamate the *Diana* of Pomp and ſplendid nothing; my bucket is not deep enough, my ſtature not high enough to reach Heaven; my bulk will not bear thoſe breadthy Sails which that Glory fils. What ſhal I do? How may I contract acquaintance with God by union with Chriſt, and rendition to his Spirit? To theſe the third Step is anſwer, *Adore his Ordinances*: Thoſe are his Leidgers which here he leaves to negotiate about affaires of Heaven; theſe are the Chariots in which *Eliahs* are whirled thither; theſe bring forth, and there is none barren amongſt them; the *good will of him that was in the buſh* are upon theſe, which Atheiſm and Irreligion would ſeparate and unbrother, as rejectitious and illegitimate. God hath appointed his Word for our Rule, his Miniſters for our Guide, his Sacraments for our Comfort, his Day for our Reſt and Refection, his Church for our Pillar and Ground of Truth; and thoſe who adore not theſe are not like to be Gods Acquaintance; Soveraignty will have no limits preſcribed by Subjects. Heaven knowes no Method but that of its own dictation: Thoſe that will be beggars, muſt not be chuſers: Intereſt with God is worth gaining by cap in hand, and upon bended knee; and they deſerve not to be heard in their requeſt, who requeſt any thing *contra formam Statuti inde editi*; the Declarative Law is, *Search the Scriptures, for they do teſtifie* (ſaith Chriſt) *of me*. And in another place: *If they will not hear Moſes and the Prophets, neither will they be perſwaded if one riſe from the dead.*

3

Deut. 33.16.

John 5.39.

Luke 16.29.

Wander not then (O ſoul) after wild phanſies and blazing figments, expoſed to view, and ſet on

broach of purpoſe to deceive and miſlead ignorant and inquiſitive worldlings, who ſet the Crown on *Coridons*, and believe Chriſt the Saviour of the world, rather from his riding on an Aſs-Colt, and obſcure parentage, then from his glorious atteſtation from Heaven, or his convincing converſation here on earth; and judg nothing Sacred, but what is indeed common and unclean: But (O ſoul) keep thou cloſe to the Ordinances of Chriſt, which his ſervants have received from him by the unqueſtionable tradition of the Church, to the Truth of which the lives and deaths of holy Martyrs, and glorious Confeſſors, have in all ages born witneſs; and do not believe that any thing is ſo lovely and truly advantageous to thy peace, and orderly conduct, as to ſerve thy God in that manner which he hath appointed: and adore thou theſe holy myſteries, by which waters the City of God in thy ſoul, ought only to be made glad.

Pſal. 46. 4.

5 And though thus to do be to do more then many now will, yet is it not the *totum poſtulatum* of thee: God (O man) requires of thee ſome tribute of praiſe; the quit-rent of Gratitude. The Pſalmiſt tells us in the perſon of God, *Whoſo offereth me praiſe, honoureth me*: and to give God the glory of his Munificence, is but to offer him of his own; it is but to pay him our Fine in his owne Coyn; for *what have we that we do not receive?* And in no kind is this ſenſe of our obligation to God better reſented by him, then by *Admiration of his Works*, which is the fourth Requiry of God towards the perfection of our Acquaintance with him, *Admiration of his Works*. And here me thinks I am enforced to exclamate with the holy Pophet,

Pſal. 50. 23.

1 Cor. 4. 7.

4

Lord,

Lord, what is Man? What his Being, Capacity, Dignity, that thou ſhouldeſt honour him with Contemplation of thee, and of thoſe Works which ſet thee out in thy back parts, though not to the ineffability of thine Eſſence? Who, O, who wiſhes not his tongue were untied, and tipped with Eloquence, excelling mortal Emulation, that he might *give to God the glory due to his name, and praiſe him according to his excellent greatneſs*; not only for that he is *high*, not for that *he is, and there is none beſides him*; but for that *he vouchſafeth to look down upon us here below, and calls us to contemplate* his good Will, as well as matchleſs Power in the Formation of things, and the orderly production of them! Here is Matter to amuſe the Secretary of Nature, and to puzzle the greateſt *Oedipus*; here is a full point to *Plato*'s Eloquence, and *Plotinus* his Profundity. Who can ſearch the Center of that Idea which was in God, when he made the Sun, Moon, and Stars, appointing them their ſeaſons, influences, order, and ſweetly tuning them each to other? Who knowes the Nature of Creatures animate and inanimate, vegetive and ſenſitive; and can ſay of their Natures, as God doth of the Seas proud Waves, *Hitherto and no further; this you can, and this you cannot do?* Where is he that ſees the abyſs of Providence, and penetrates into that privy Chamber of Divinity, which is for Gods eye only? daring to affirme what ſhall and ſhall not be; and the conſequences of things natural and contingent? Sure, no mortal man, undementated, dare ſo confide in Art, and dote ſo fondly on his vain ſhadow, as to boaſt of this, which is Gods incommunicable Jewel, and Pſalm 150. 2.

the Prerogative of his Crown. Our portion (Oman) is to wait Gods diſcovery; *Secret things belong to God, but things revealed to us*; and *God forbid we ſhould come neerer the Mount* then is indulged us, or *endeavour after Wiſdom beyond Sobriety*; Our duty is to acquaint our ſelves with God, not by knowing him as he is, for thats impoſſible; but by knowing him as he manifeſts himſelf in works of Power, Providence, Mercy; and in the improvement of what light we borrow from this Lamp, we may ſee enough to make us in love with him, who made all things as, and what they are, and to what they ſhall be: In him the Rich and the poor, the wiſe and the ſimple, the Brute and the Rational, the Worm and the Angel, the Flye and the Eagle, the Ant and the Elephant, the Mouſe and the Lion, the Eele and the Whale meet; God is the Maker of them all, and the ſame power went to the production of the leaſt as greateſt; from him come winds and ſeaſons, and without him nothing is that is, nor ſhall be that he wills not: this is the ſum of what we can reach to in the folio of Contemplation and practice; for whatever helps Art & Nature give us, come far ſhorter of the utmoſt extent of Gods Works, than the ſhorteſt ladder is ſhort of the Heaven we ſee, or the impureſt ſoul of that better Heaven we hope for: The beſt Meditation we can make, is that of the Father, *Si tale Artificium, qualis Artifex? ſi tale eſt quod fecit, qualis eſt qui fecit?* If the courage of the Lion, ſtrength of the Elephant, capacity of the Whale, prudence of the Ant, continence of the Dove, If the world be ſo variouſly fitted with neceſſaries, for delight, ſupport, and exerciſe of man, and his Nature

Deut. 29.29.
Exod. 24.2.

ſo

ſo adapted to ſearch into, and bleſſed to find out and improve the ſecrets, and ſeveral qualities of things, creatures, and continents, in ſome proportion ſutable to his being, and Gods deſignment; hath he not great cauſe to cry out with that Kingly Prophet, *O how fearfully and how wonderfully am I made!* for who can confeſs leſs then this, *The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the Firmament ſhewes his handy work?* Pſal. 139. 14. 19. 1.

But (O man) wander not too wildly in this wilderneſs, wherein are beaſts of Prey, uncouth paths, diſmal upſhots; thine errand and end is to admire the works of God; that thou maiſt do, it is thy duty, and Gods exact of thee ſo to do, and thou thy ſelfe art a fair Text to ſuch pious Meditations; God created thee ſomething of nothing, a Man, not a Toad, a Chriſtian, not a Heathen, of clear intellect not brutiſh, of right ſhape not deformed; and conſider, this calls for Gratitude. God hath beautified thee with a bright Sun, refreſhed thee by a ſweet gale of wind in thy ſayls, thou art at the wiſhed Port, ſupported by a miraculous hand of Providence, he hath diſcovered to thee thy dangers, conducted thee in thy way, miniſtred to thy wants, when others not leſs his, nor leſs themſelves then thou, go mourning all the day long, are on their duty, waiting (with the Cripple) when the good Angel will come to their comfort, but all in vain: No Butter ſticks on their bread, their cake is dough, as the Proverb is; All is fruitleſs; Remember the more thou receiveſt, the more thou muſt return: *Cui plus datur, ab illo plus exigitur*; in fine, rather John 5. 4.

ther labour to improve wel that thou haſt, then to covet more to miſuſe it, and abuſe thy ſoul; for God expects from all men, as he ſowes, ſo to reap; and thou art an Unthrift on his Bounty, if thou returneſt him not obedience and love, who hath crowned thee with Honour and Plenty above thy fellowes.

Deut. 32.15. But (O man) above all things, be not like *Jeſurun*; ſpurn not with the heel; when thou art fat, forget not the hand that feeds thee, and the paps of Providence that ſuckle thee; nor let thine hornes be exalted to worry and plague thy fellow ſervants of a lower Form then thou art: This is not to be like God, good, gentle, and *nigh unto all thoſe that call upon him*; but liker the ſervant in Matth. 32.32. the Goſpel, who *took his fellow ſervant by the throat*, when he himſelf was forgiven by *his Lord the greater Debt*; yea, this is not to admire God, but to reproach him, as miſgiving Power and Greatneſs, and truſting it in the hands of thoſe, who by it prey upon, not protect the Sheep: This is not to admire the Works of God, but to admire thy ſelf, and to ſacrifice to thine own Ambition and inordinacy, and ſo to diſhonour God who com-
Phil. 4.5. mands, *Our Moderation ſhould be known to all men*; yea, this is to be unworthy of Acquaintance with God, who is Shepherd of his Sheep, and delights in Lillyes, things harmleſs and benigne; and thoſe that are not ſuch, ſhall do well to con-
Jer. 30.16. ſider that of the Prophet, *I will ſpoil the Spoiler*; and ſteer another courſe for the future, even to *emendation of life*; which brings up the rear of what God requires from thoſe that wil be acquainted with him, and calls for my next Meditation.

Laſtly,

5. Laſtly, *Renovation of Life* is a chief adjunct to Acquaintance with God: Light and darkneſs, Chriſt and Belial, Dagon and the Ark do not agree; new cloth and old garments ſute not, nor will generous Wine endure crazy bottles; nor a Kingly mind brook the thatched cottage: There is nothing more averſe to the pure Nature of God, then the impure life of a ſinner; his eye loathes, his hand corrects, his heart reluctſ, his Word reproves, his Spirit labours againſt it; he cannot but call with a loud voice, *O do not that abominable thing which I hate*; and correct, by *revealing his wrath from Heaven againſt the ungodlineſs of men*: Till thou (O man) return to him by Repentance, there is no peace with God to be hoped for, no amity to be attained. The means to gain God, is to own thy ſelf, and to return to thy fathers love, to weep over thy wandrings, and to drown thy ſins in penitent tears, as did *Mary Magdalen* and *Peter*. Then, then only are we worthy to be friends of God, when we are not profane as *Eſau*, but holy as *Abraham*; not rude as *Nimrod*, but meek as *Moſes*; not rebellious as *Abſolom*, but devout as *David*; not treacherous as *Judas*, but penitent as *Peter*; not vexatious as *Saul*, but couragious as *Paul*; not embracing the world as did *Demas*, but contemning it and our ſelves, as *ought the Diſciple of Chriſt, who muſt deny himſelfe, and take up the Croſs*. This, this is to be *born again*, *Nicodemus* his leſſon; this is to be *renewed in the ſpirit of our minds*; this is to *ceaſe to do evil, and learn to do well*; this is to *put on the Lord Jeſus, and to take no thought for the fleſh*; this is *to have no fellowſhip with unfruitful works of darkneſs, but rather to reprove them*;

5

Jer. 44. 4. Rom. 1. 18.

Luke 15. 18.

Mark 8. 34. John 3. 3. Epheſ. 4. 23. Iſai. 1. 16. Rom. 13. 14. Epheſ. 5. 11.

them; this is to *put off the old man, and to put on*
Ephes.4. 22,24 *the new man, which after God is created in Righteouſneſſe and true Holineſſe*; this is to lay the burthen of our ſins upon Chriſt, and to take the beauty of Holineſs from him: this is to gain heavens amneſty, to *remove our ſins far from us, as the Eaſt is from the Weſt*, and *to cauſe them to come no more in remembrance before God*; yea, this is to be throughly acquainted with God, and to have him the ſouls Sun and Shield, *who will give*
Pſal.84.11. *Grace and Glory, and withhold no good thing from it.*

Theſe are the *bona notabilia*, which God keeps as the reward of Piety; as his ſecrets, ſo his comforts are with thoſe that fear him. Cluſters of *Canaan*, grow not upon Crabſtocks of *Sodom*: Divine familiarity is not with mortal fœdity: They which will have God their Lord, muſt have his Rule for their Guide. Penitence muſt ſupply the want of Innocence, or elſe God will deny acceptance: It is not for me to ſay, I will return after, and be received firſt. God will have his Doles of Mercy diſtributed to Pennancers; and the Oyle of Gladneſs returned to thoſe faces whoſe heads were covered with aſhes: A weeping eye is no ſmall Favourite with a merciful God, who not only
Luke 15,7. greets with an *Euge*, returning ſins, but commands an *Exultate*, in Heaven amongſt the Angels for it; and thoſe that ſow their wild oats in tears, ſhall reap their wages in due time; namely, Mercy and Joy, in, *Come ye Bleſſed of my Father, receive the Manſion prepared for you*, by Acquaintance with God; namely, *Peace*, which

is

is the third hinge of my Meditation, and followes in the Scripture, *Acquaint now thy ſelf with God, and be at peace.*

The third Quere is, *What Peace it is thoſe have who are acquainted with God?* And here *ſilet lingua, ſtupet animus, deficit oratio.* Peace which paſſeth Underſtanding (ſuch the Peace of God is) may well exceed utterance. The tongue is the hearts Bell-man, and the cry is acording to the conception. As what food nouriſheth not, will not tranſide into the members aggrandization; ſo what the thought ſprings not, will never ſwell into words; Peace then, of this peace of God, it is ſomewhat ineffabile, paſt finding out, it is hid in the hollow of his hand, under his pavillion, from the ſtrife of tongues, which in treating of its peace, would break the peace of Truth. But (O my ſoul) is this the forbidded tree? maiſt not thou taſte and not dye? Hath God cabinetted up this Jewel, and muſt not man ſee it and live? Is this the one thing neceſſary; yet prohibited? Doth God require that of me which is impoſſible to me? And are my comforts ſurrounded with a flaming Sword, inacceſſible? Nothing leſs? The well is deep (O my ſoul) but thy backet is ſutable; the Pearle is dear, but thy price in hand will reach it; thy peace is precious, and it is depoſited with him, who hath *broke down the wall of Separation*; there is a *new and living way to this Holy of Holies, not by blood of Bulls and Goats; but by the blood of Chriſts Croſs*, the Chriſtians glory, and Signature of his Peace.

Queſt. 3.

Epheſ. 2. 14.

But is this peace a complete Armature and Panoply? Doth it fit every part? Is it proof in every

every joint; is there no ſoft place in it, through which the poiſon of Satans power or policy will pierce? Is it a ſweet Nightingale in the breſt, as well as a Head-piece and Guard to the outward man? Yes ſure, the peace ſpoken of in this Scripture is every way lovely, like *Jonathan*, lovely in life, and lovely in death; a great ſource of Joy to thee, while thou art on thy way, and a glorious Epitaph on thy Monument, when thou haſt done thy work, and run out thine Hour-glaſs.

This Peace is *Tripartite* { *Pax Temporis.* / *Pax Pectoris.* / *Pax Numinis.* }

Or { *External* Of viſion to the Eye. / *Internal* Of Contemplation to the Mind. / *Eternal* Of Fruition both to Soul & Senſe: }

1 *Peace outward*, that is a fruit of Acquaintance with God: for thus he giveth his Beloved reſt: that the Creatures are under thine awe, that the Elements are thy Pavillion, the Clouds thy Ciſterns, the Sun, Moon and Stars thy Tapers, the earth thy Granary, the Cattle thy Food and Rayment, is from God who is good, and doth good. I do not ſay, that Peace is always the Badg of Grace, or that it ever, in regard of Externities, fares well with thoſe who are good. I know the contrary, and ſo did *David* to his trouble long ago; and *Job chap.* 12.6. complainins that the *Tabernacles of Robbers proſper, and they that provoke God are ſecure*; yea and *Jeremy* reaſons with God concerning his Judgments, *Why do the wicked proſper*

and

*and thoſe that hate God are exalted? Jer.*12.1. While holy men are clad in ſack-cloth, and covered with aſhes, *go mourning all the day long*, have not (with their Saviour) *a hole to hide their heads in*, nor a crumb to feed their bellies, or a rag to cover their nakedneſs. Do I not read of *Dives* faring deliciouſly, of *Nebuchadnezzar* quaffing in the holy veſſels? yet the one wanting nothing but room to lay his wealth in, and the other priding in the *Babel that he had built for the glory of his Majeſty?* And doth not the ſame ear let in the Narrative of *Elijahs* poverty, *fed by a Raven*; and of *Pauls* neceſſities, *ſupplyed by the labour of his hands?* Are not wicked mens *Oxen ſtrong to labour?* and ſee we not their perſons and fortunes free from captivity and reſtraint? when men more holy then they, having no oxen to labour for them, are fain themſelves to labour like oxen to tread out their ſupport, and to pay from the ſweat of their brows, a tribute to their Tyrannous Maſters; who with more then Egyptian ſeverity, lay load of brick, and withdraw the allowance and furtherances thereto? If it be ſo, how is acquaintance with God a way to outward peace?

Luke 16.19. Dan. 5.23. 1 King. 17. Act. 20.34.

I anſwer, Yes: it is the way to outward peace truly ſo called, that is, to ſanctified outward peace, which is peace in a proper and ſavoury ſenſe: Meer ſerenity of ſtate, is as far from bleſſing, as eaſe is from health; which ſeldom is propagated by it, but often impeached and deflowred. When peace and proſperity is beſtowed upon bad men, 'tis to reward ſome good thing in them: ſome ſervice they have done God; God leaves not thoſe unrewarded, whom *his own bounty*, not *their propenſions* hath

hath made *ſerviceable* to him; or at leaſt to leave them without excuſe, *that they may be ſilent when*
Iſa.45.1. & 4. *they are judged.* This is the portion that *Hagars* children have; this is the husk that Gods *prodigals* feed upon; this is the mark they level at; like Hel and the Grave, they cry *Give, Give.* And what do they gape after? 'Tis *auri ſacra fames*, *Alexanders* Conqueſts, *Craſus* his Wealth, *Tully* his Oratory, *Metellus* his proſperity: theſe take up their proſpectives, bound their aims, ſwell their plumes: This fatted calf have theſe for their entertainment; *Ultra neque ſpes, neque timor*; they conſider not the ſowr ſawce that follows this Paſſover. On the contrary, When Affliction befalls the Godly, it is to ventilate, to winnow their chaffe from them, to correct them for frailtie, and to chaſe them out of their covert, in which they delighted themſelves as on beds of Ivory, and in wayes of Roſes: Suppurated ſores muſt have Corroſives: 'Tis too much cruelty to powr in Oyl, where there is need of mundifying: Afflictions and external quaſſations are like thunder, purgations to the air: The Soul is never better then when out of the Sun-ſhine: Then it gathers up its garments, and crowds cloſe
Hoſ.5.15. to God: *In their afflictions they will ſeek me early.*

Nor have the wicked proſperity and peace in peace; *Aliquando ſub hilari vultu triſtis animus.*
Pro.14.13. *Solomon* tels us, *In the midſt of laughter, the heart is*
Dan.5.5 *ſorrowfull*; ſometimes there is *an hand on the wall*, a red Croſſe of Gods diſpleaſure on the fronts of our peace; There is peace, peace, and no peace; *Midas* his miſery, *Eryſickthons* thirſt, a coveting eye and a nauſeating ſtomack, a grand eſtate and a
Eccleſ.6.2. penurious ſoul: here is *the evil under the Sun Solomon* ſpeaks of. Some-

Sometimes prosperity and peace, as Riches is given to the hurt of the Owners; sometimes there is denyed somewhat with it, for which it is appetible, as Heires, Health, Friends; and ever there is denyed to wicked men, *Gods blessing on it, which brings no sorrow with, nor after it*: the absence of which, causeth the dregs in the bottom of all worldly peace to worldly minds, for it makes them cry out of Prosperity, as captived *Cræsus* did of *Solon*; *O* Solon, Solon, *had I hearkned to thy premonitions, I had never been so unprovided for bonds and captivity*. Of these then, that which the Apostle sayes of the Unchaste widdow, is most true, they are *dead when they live*. But to the Godly it is far otherwise, their peace outward is ever sanctified, not as to the present use of it (for they may faint in the Sunshine, they may be lifted up through abundance of Revelation) but as to the Sacred end, and ultimate result of it: God shall turn this by the Sacred Chymistry of Omnipotency, into Good: This is within the pale of *All things work together for good to them that love God*.

Eccles. 5. 3. Gen. 15. 2. Prov. 10. 22. 1 Tim. 5. 6. Rom. 8. 28.

Away then, thou Accuser of the Brethren, avoid thou Tempter to Evil, and thou Mortar Piece of Divine Fury, Satan. Away yee children of Darkness, who hate those of Light, because your deeds are evil; forbear your tauntings of those whom the Lord hath smitten; justifie not those whose Iniquitous Ballances have made themselves onely weighty, and all others too light: the Standard of Justice is coming round; your doom is *Mene tekel Upharsin*; the glory of your forged Sanctimony

Dan. 5. 25.

is defaced; God will humble the pride of men, and poliſh his ruſted Saints, by the ariſing beams of the Sun of Righteouſneſs: The Churches Soveraigne is at hand; and though his firſt coming was in humilitie, his next will be in glorie, to ride in triumph over all feigned Piety, and to ſet theſe Goats of Luſt and Rage on his left hand; Lift up (O holy ones) your heads, Your Redemption draws nigh: Hee that dyed for you, will owne you, and expects you ſhould owne him, in preſerving his ſeamleſſe coat from rents, and in keeping unity of Spirit, though there be difference of Language. Peace be (O holy ſouls) to you, the peace of this world, not by its gifts, but by Donation of him, who hath ſubjected all things; prepare your ſelves by holy love to deal out your Riches to thoſe that want; freely ye receive, freely give: O far be it from you to give vinegar and gall to your brethren, ſince your Father in Heaven gives you the generous liquor of Love, and bids you do as you would be done by. Take your fils of the waters of outward plenty, *Marah* is cured, the bitterneſs of death is paſt, Chriſt hath by his Croſs ſo crucified the world to you, that it is now become your Vaſſal, not your Lord: remember there is the portion of Peace annexed to Acquaintance with God, *So do, and ſo have.*

But is this all? are the grains of allowance only in Externals? Is my Carcaſs more worthy then my Soul? What ſhall be done to that *animula blandula*, which is after a ſort *Partaker of the* DIVINE *Nature*? is there no accrewment to that

2 Pet. 1. 4.

that? Doth God take care of Sparrowes, and of the haires of our heads; and is there no provision made for that which is the Nightingale of Eternity? Surely yes, two for one; the double portion for this first-born: One portion respects its conjunction here with the body; and the other its separation from, and glorification with the body in Heaven; the first in Grace, the second in Glory; the first in *via*, the Comfort and Peace of a good Conscience; and the latter and better, in *Patria*, of a good God, in a glorious Kingdom, *Heaven*.

2 *Peace Internal*; not Physical, *sans* Palpitation of the Heart; *sans* exclamation of the Passions, or their crowing shrils in the brain: but peace Metaphysical; the peace of God in the breast of man; God as it were incarnate, sitting on the Tribunal of a Mortal Judicatory. *Now the winter is past, the stormes are over, the singing of birds is come, the voice of the Turtle*, of the *Primum Mobile*, is heard; O Extatick Elamire! O Seraphick Ela! O Note stept aside from the Quire of Angels, to entice our Admirations! *Doth God dwell with man? can these houses of clay contain him* that is whatever is Infinite and Incomprehensible, which he is? Be thou, O Lord, with my pen, and let it be thine Instrument to decipher this, which is so rare, which is whatever Nature can aspire to value.

Peace of Conscience, a Jewel which abates not price; a child of light admired in all Ages. Persons, Countries sought after when not had, cherished where possessed, deplored when lost; whom Patriarks, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors

feſſors, Chriſtians valued, and to which they peered nothing.

Peace of conſcience, the Salt that ſeaſons Mirth, ſweetens Sorrow, and the Plummet that ſounds the bottom of every coaſt, and diſcovers Shipwrack and ſafety.

Peace of Conſcience, the Touchſtone of our innocency, the probate of our Zeal, the Furnace of our Charity; for then only can we love God and our Neighbor when his love is ſhed abroad in our hearts, by his holy Spirit, who works this peace in us.

Peace of Conſcience, that Phenix neſt made up of the Perfumes of Graces, out of which expiring, riſes peace of Eternitie.

Peace of Conſcienee, heaven on earth, glory in weakneſs, light in obſcuritie, *Abrahams* boſom in *Lazarus* ſores.

Peace of Conſcience; *Goſhen* in *Egypt*, Gods *Segullah* to the *Alchimy of* the worlds Admirables; the fat kine of holy ſerenity, that by a miraculous tranſpoſition ſwallow up all the lean kine of worldly cares, and confounds the wiſdom of ſecular intereſts.

Peace of Conſcience, the Lily of the vallies in which Chriſt neſtles; the Roſe of *Sharon*, on which the Sun of Righteouſneſs ſmiles; to which *Solomons* bravery is but Beggery, and *Herods* oratory but babling.

Peace of Conſcience, compared with which, Balm of *Gilead* is but like the trifling Compound of a Quack Salve; and the Gold of *Ophir* but as droſs and dung.

Peace of Conſcience, to which Power and Policy, arts,

Arts and Armies, Councels and Senates are but as Molehils to Mountains, Ants to Men, Atomes to the body of this earth, and the dwindling light of the candle, to the center of light enveloped in the Sun

Peace of Conſcience, the Muſick, to which *Orpheus* his Harp, and *Arions* Pipe, helped on with *Syrens* voice, are but ſo many ſtraines of perfect diſcord and diſpleaſing Harmony.

Peace of Conſcience, the beſt companion of life, the ſweeteſt Confeſſor at death, the nobleſt Memorial after death; nay, the ſouls *prodomus* (next under Chriſt) to Heaven, for thither it ran on *Cornelius* his errand, to diſplay his Almes; and thither it muſt go, to the credit and comfort of all that have it, *For there is none of this peace to the wicked, ſaith my God.*

Here, O profane worldlings, here, O wretched Politico's, yee are outſtripped; pleaſures, profits, honors, have no ſuffrage in this conſiſtory, they cannot make their Maſters partakers of this delight, to which all others are but ſhadowes, as far beneath them as drops to the Ocean. Neither *Alexanders* Power, nor *Solomons* Wiſdom, nor *Mithridates* his Wealth, nor *Juſtinians* Learning, nor *Galens* Receipts, nor *Archimedes* his Experiments can procure this; 'tis a gift from *above*, *deſcending from the Father of Lights*, and referring the ſoul to him as the Author and Finiſher of its Felicity. Jam. 1. 17.

Here is ſomewhat ſtupendious; but this, how far ſoever tranſcending the utmoſt outward advantage, is but porch and prologue to thoſe

Magnalia Dei, those *Arcana Patriæ*, which *neither eye hath seen, nor ear have heard, nor entred into the heart of man to think of*; namely, the good things God hath laid up in heaven for those that fear him, not to be attained or enjoyed here (alas, our Vessels are too narrow to receive that Ocean where there is incapability of reception, there is no probability of retention:) if we cannot be in possession while in the flesh, let us covet to depose this garment of incapability, and thirst after that glory which Heaven exalts us to; specified to us in that Jewel, *Peace Eternal*,

Acquaint now thy self with God and be at Peace; that is, be every way blest; *within*, in a serenity of mind; *without*, in a fortunate condition, exempt from evils, or sanctified to thee in spight of evils; for when a *mans wayes please the Lord, he will make his enemies be at peace with him*; or without fail, above, in the beatitude of thy soul to all eternity.

Prov. 17. 7.

This is the *rest that remains to the people of God*; this is the *Mansion prepared by Christ*, of which he took possession by his Ascension, and in which he now is in Session at the right hand of God. This is that *Jerusalem above, which is free, the mother of us all*, where Hallelujahs are Musick, Angels Choristers, the Divine Nature prospect, Saints Companions, and the Lamb Light in the midst thereof.

Heb. 4. 9.
John 14. 3.
Gal. 4. 26.

This is Heaven, not in Enthusiastick raptures, not in fanatick Novelties, not in raving Blasphemies, but in deed and truth.

This is Heaven, not that of pleasure in *Ammons* Lust, in *Achans* Wedg, in *Solomons* Wisdom, in *Methuselahs* long life, in *Achitophels* Craft, or in

Judas

Judas his gain by Treachery; but Heaven in the bosom of Christ, who is *Exalted above Principalities and Powers.*

This is heaven, not in Types and Figures, not in dark and remote viewes, not in variating forms, and unfixed Stations, but in real consistence, and unalterable duration.

This is Heaven, not blemished by sin, not tedious through sorrow, not ruled by sinful will, not vanquished by lawless power, not tainted by profaneness, not deserted by time, not impairable in value and real worth, but ever what can be wished for, and never less then it at any time was or is.

Lastly, This is Heaven, not infected with pride, not dejected with poverty, not shrivelled with age, not scorched with heat, not determining with time.

Heaven, a Kingdom for its glory and capacity, purchased by the price of blood, and the pre-appointm ent of Mercy; for not all, but for many, yet those a little flock, those who are acquainted with God in grace, and by him rewarded with this Peace.

Now I am in Meditation at the Ladders top; but have we spoke well of this *Canaan?* Is not this Peace of eternity the least of our treatment, though in it Christ be, as was *Bethlehem Ephrata* little amongst the Tribes of *Judah*, out of which Christ came? Is not *Isaak* mistaken, and sent away with a smal pittance, in stead of the son of *Hagar?* What means my line upon line on other Subjects less worthy, and my brevity on this head that exceedeth them all. Micah. 5. 2.

Truly more Devotion then words, more Admiration then Oratory befits this Subject; Scholastick Diſpute, and eloquent Panegyricks are the Fucuſſes that adorn this Elementary world, and pleaſe its Aery Inhabitants; theſe are the *Diana*'s of vain men, and thoſe Treaſures which they pride in, and relye on, as inexhauſtible; and with theſe they delude ſouls, and diſhonour him who beautified us with that bravery, that we might honour him as our Creator, follow him as our Pattern, yea fall down before him as our Judge. When I am in Meditation of Heaven, I rather pray for a warm heart, and keen affections; for abilities to believe in, and adhere to God, then for curious Speculations and pathetick words; and therefore ſince faith muſt ſupply what ſenſe cannot attain to, and thoſe things that are ſecret and ineffable, are rather to be adored, then ſearched into, or written upon; I can here conclude this part of my Meditation in the Wiſemans words, *The knowledg of this is too wonderful for me, it is high, I cannot attain unto it.*

And declining further thought of this Peace which here I cannot underſtand; enquire into the evil we are aſſured to eſcape both here and hereafter, which is the fourth Enquiry, *How this Peace may be ſaid to repel evil from us?* in that clauſe, *So ſhall no evil come unto thee.*

Peace and Evil are here oppoſed, not more in the words then ſenſe. Evil like the Canker eats out either our Peace, or at leaſt eclipſeth the comfort of it; evil of ſin deſerves no peace; evil of puniſhment believes and finds no peace; to the one peace is not, to the other it ſeems not to be, and ſo

is

is not at all as to the preſent diſcovery: That therefore the Holy Ghoſt might ſet every Trophie upon its proper baſis, I conceive him, uſing this order in this Scripture, to teach us, that as Acquaintance with God is the way to peace, ſo is the peace of God crowned with exemption from evil; and that none can expect to have Gods cuſtodye; but thoſe which are in League and Amity with him; *Bee at Peace, ſo ſhall no evil come unto thee.*

No Evil, Not Satan, the Tempter to it, and the Traducer for it; Chriſts Prayer is our Antimure, *Deliver us from evil*; that is, from that evil one. From his Power, as the *Lion that goes about* 1 Pet. 5. 8. *ſeeking whom he may devour*: From his Policy, for Epheſ 6. 11. we know his Methods, his pious Fraudes, his *Scriptum eſts*, his Lamblike, Angellick manifeſtations, his transformations into ſhews of Light and 2 Cor. 11. 14. external ſanctity, and all to *deceive, if poſſible, the* Matth. 24. 24. *very Elect.*

From his Agents, who Ape-like act his part to much perfection (χειροκάτηλοι and χειρέμποροι) make Merchandiſe of Faith and a good Conſcience, care not what they do to make Proſelytes and pervert ſouls. This crafty *Policrates*, Satan, moves 2 Pet. 2. 3. every ſtone to his advantage, and hath flags of all colours to hang out for our ſurprize; he hath Inſtruments that with the Zeal of old *Arſenius* ſeem to forſake their Countries and Fortunes to devote themſelves to God; his *Luciferians*, that come in the veſts of innocency, but *inwardly are ravening* *wolves, having the poiſon of Aſps under their tongues*, Matth. 7. 15. and the rancour of Divels in their hearts; whom Chriſt commands us *to beware of*, *Mat.* 10. 17. He hath

hath his *Artemons*, that have such convicting deportments that they lead men which way they list, by their *suaviloquium* charmes, and compleasant influences; his Pharisees, that swallow downe Widowes houses in the hollow of long Prayers; that are all to all men, that they might reduce all men to be nothing to any but themselves; his Saduces that deny Resurrection, Angels, Spirit, but what is theirs, those they cry up as Ocular, execrating all that are not of their party, and cry not Grace, Grace to this *Apollyon* of their designing. Lord, what a Gallamaufry of Frauds hath this great Engineere on foot? How is he furnished to deceive, who hath not only the tongues and pens of many men Learned, but lying Wonders and miraculous Artifices at his service? But we know his methods, and may see this *Apicius* gaping to devour all; contented with nothing but ruine and disorder, though he cry out with *Jehu*, *Behold my Zeal.*

And it were well if men would try the spirits that now are abroad, for Satan is often a Lying spirit in the mouth of Prophets, and a Prophecying spirit in the mouth of Lyers: and if he durst mingle himself with the Sons of God, when they came before him of old, may he not now be well mistrusted: though he quote Scripture with the zeal of a Seraphim, and in the meetings of Christians pray and speak with notable evidence; he who durst appear before Christ with Scripture abused to his own purpose, dare do the like to Christians, whose weakness is more opportune to his Conquest. He is that Evil one, who in his whites

Job 1.6.

Matth. 4.6.

whites is a Divel of Deceit, in his blacks a Divel of Malice, in his Crimsons a Divel of blood; a Divel in all shapes, actions, senses, and happy is it for us that we know his Methods. And Agents; not men of trifling talents, who need vulgar helps to make them eminent; but men of great parts, noble wits, yea often noted lives; speaking to wonder, writing to amazement, living to envy and example; the Leaders of *Israel* sometimes caused them to err; *The Priests divined a falsehood*; the Divel of *Sauls* heart (in *Samuels* flesh as it were) is potent enough to misguide millions. O Lord what a Progress hath the mystery of iniquity made, when the Serpent stings the Dove to death; Religion becomes politized! What an *Egypt* will *Canaan* be, when Mannah is exchanged for Garlick and Onions, when the Screech Owl extrudes the Turtle; and that be upon us which the *Jewes* feared, *John* 11.48. The Romane come and take away our Religion, and (I pray God) not our place and Nation. Isai.9.16.

Is not this evil of the Divels designing? Is not the hand of hells *Joab*, Satan in it, but the sword of the Lord and of his *Gideon* Christ Jesus shall prevent this, though none stand in the gap; no *Moses* intercedes, no *Phineas* executes Judgment; yet this Plague shall cease; God for his own namesake will turn those Locusts (the Jesuits) back to their quarters; and make their Design as a red sea to bury themselves in. The Thumbs of these *Adonibezeks* shall be cut off, the Pride and Policy of these *Absoloms* become their ruines, *So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord.*

Well,

Well, we have a ſight of Satan in his power, and agents; now ſee him in his Policy and end, which is to cut off *Samſons locks*; to deſtroy the *Males of Iſrael*; to ruine all the Smithes and Forges by which our Spiritual weapons ſhould be edged to oppoſe him, and defend our ſelves againſt his aſſaults; thus did the Philiſtims of old to *Iſrael*, 1 *Sam.*13.9. But I hope God will turne this Wiſdom into Folly, and this *Babel* of Hope into a *Babel* of Defeat; yea, I will beſpeak theſe Gates of Hell to give way to the Rock of Ages, and to Chriſt the Corner ſtone, who is with his Church to the end of the world; and I will pray that the iniquity of their hearts may be forgiven them, who hate the Church of *England* without a cauſe, and endeavour to ſubvert the Religion of it againſt Scripture that aſſerts it.

And now is not cuſtody from this evil an unſpeakable Bleſſing? Is it not as rain to the parched graſs, and ought we not to receive this Mercy with the joy of Harveſt? Is it not a ſerious collect which deprecates Satans ſucceſs; while he with *Herod* acts a Tragedy on Innocents, and labours to ſteal away the Babe Chriſt out of his mothers lap the Church; his mother the Church; not to rob the bleſſed Virgin of her Crown (*All Generations call her Bleſſed*, becauſe ſhe bare his body in her womb) but to right the Church againſt her Rival, the Synagogue of Satan, which diſowns her, and ſeeks Chriſt out of her, who ſpiritually is only formed in her, from which evil, and the infatuation of it, good Lord deliver us.

This is the firſt Evil (*Satan*) from which the Peace of God ſhields us, the next is from *Sin*; like father

father, like child; a chip of the old block, a branch of that Lye which was from the beginning.

From ſin, the evil of inquination, that which defiles the man, defaces Gods image, paſſes an eternal exile twixt the ſoul and him, for he hath no *fellowſhip with unfruitful works of Darkneſs; His eye is on them that are upright, but he cutteth off the wicked from the earth, and rooteth out the Tranſgreſſors.* Prov. 2. ult.

From ſin, the Evil of Angels, for becauſe of folly beheld in them, they were caſt from Heaven; 1 Pet. 2. 4. the evil of Kings and great men, for whom *Tophet is prepared of old*; Iſai 30 33. Sin, the evil of men of low degree; ſin, the evil of all; for the *whole world groaneth under it, and lies in it.* 1 John 5. 19.

From ſin, the eyes grief, becauſe by that it prevailed againſt *Eve*, by that againſt the ſons of God of the old world: Sin, the hearts ake; thus in Saint *Paul* crying out, *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death*! Sin, the feets ſnare, againſt which *David* cautions, *I ſaid I wil take heed to my ways*; Sin, the tongues temptation to ſpeak unadviſedly; Sin, the Catholick Croſs to all that are crucified with Chriſt, and myſtical members of him; Sin, the breach of Gods Law, the grief of his Spirit, the price of his Son, the torment of his Combatant, and the triumph of his Crowned ones; Sin, the Monſter of *Paradiſe*, for there it was plotted; the firſt born of life, for therein it is acted; the plague of this world, on whoſe Stage it is attyred, and thence maturated. Sin, ſomething of nothing, a tumourous bubble of peſtilent pride, ſcorching Luſt, and empty vanity, evaporating in nothing but the Luſt Gen. 3. 6. 6 6. Rom 7. 24. Pſal. 39. 1.

of

of the flesh, Lust of the eye, and the Pride of life.

Sin an evil inward in the thought, outward in the act, upward against God whom it contemnes, and downward against earth whom it burthens, and all to gratifie him who is *Prince of the Air, and rules in the hearts of the Children of disobedience.* Sin against the Creation, whom it disorders; against Redemption, which it frustrates; against Sanctification, which it defies; against Preservation, which it contradicts; against Salvation, which it abjures. Sin against which, as the greatest evil, God protests; to prevent which Angels watch; to recal from which the Spirit sollicites; to direct how to avoid which, the word is positive; against which to practise, the holy men of all ages are presidents; yea, to expiate which the blood of Christ the Lamb of God was shed, and his soul for it made an Offering.

What shall I say more against this which is so dishonourable to God, and ought to be execrable to his people? but in the words of *Moses, Cursed be he that continues not in all the words of the Law to do them*; that is, who desires not to give sin the foil, by a contrary and constant course of virtue, according to the will of God in his Word, and the assistance he hath from God in this Race to complete this resolution, for without that we can do nothing.

We then, to be helped from this evil, is a mercy, a consequent of Gods peace with the soul; that is clear from the Prophet, *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace* (or neerer the Original, *in peace peace*) *whose heart is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee*

thee. He, O holy ſoul, that keepeth thee never ſlumbereth, his eye is on thy feet, to keep them; *He keepeth the feet of his Saints*, ſaith *Hannah*: On thine *eye*, to hinder thy luſt; on thy *hand*, to prevent thy cruelty; on thy *tongue*, to ſuſpend thine obſcenity; on thy *whole man*, to keep thee from ſin, *that it raign not in this mortal body* of thine. He was with *Noah in the Ark*, to keep him from deſpair of out-living the Floud, which drowned the world; with *Moſes* in the wilderneſs, to preſerve him from disbanding his rude multitude, whom God deſigned for *Canaan*, and inclining him to bear the petulancies of popularities; rather then chuſe the contents of a private retirement: He was with *David* in his flights from *Saul*, and fights with Philiſtims: And kept him from deſponding, upon aſſurance of a Kingdom for his reward: He was with *Jeremy* in the Dungeon, and with *Jonah* in the Whales belly; to ſweeten ſtraights to his, and to make them more pure in their enlargements. He was with *Peters* tongue, converting thouſands at a Sermon, and making his pride do penitance where it offended, yea, weep out its own retraction. He was with *Paul* by *grace ſufficient for him*, when he ſaw the *meſſenger of Satan* tempted him by abundant *revelations to be lifted up above meaſure*. In the fire he is with his, and in the water he is with his: yea with you, O holy ſouls, he is alwayes, to the end of the world. With you (O holy ſouls) to keep you in all your wayes, to ſecure you in all your dangers, to reſolve you in all your doubts, to ſupport you under all your ſufferings, and with you to deliver you out of them: With you as a Sun to enlighten, as a ſheild to

defend

defend, as an Anchor to reſt on, as a Pilot to guide you, and as a Champion to overcome your feares. With you, to keep you in your Race, that you faint not; and with you, to reward you with fulneſs of joy in his preſence. This is ſecond to the former priviledge, the peace of God keeps from Evil. 1. *Satan*: 2. *Sin*.

3 The third Viol is not yet paſt, but behind, that is, *Sorrow and Sufferings*: thoſe it alſo preſerves againſt, not that they daſh not on us, but that they overwhelm us not; not that they come not nigh, but that they come not over us to overcome us: Chriſt in the Ship priviledgeth not from toſſing, but drowning. I will not fear the ranting Seas, if my rebuking Saviour (whoſe voice thoſe waves and winds obey) be embarqued with me. Miſtake not (O holy ſoules) your Leſſon; it is the voice of your Beloved that ſayes, *In the world yee ſhall have Tribulation*: the Croſs is your Saviours Sheep-mark, and thoſe that are of his flock, brook his Eare mark; their ear muſt not refuſe the Tryal Chriſts ſide had; if that was pierced, they muſt expect like meaſure; and thoſe that will not follow him in the Regeneration, have little cauſe to conclude him theirs in his Kingdome. What (O man) wilt thou with thy Saviour wear the Crown of Glory, and refuſe that other of Thornes with him? Wilt thou be acclamated for a Co-heir, a King, and Prieſt with Chriſt, and not be ſpit upon and derided with him here? Wilt thou drink the new wine with him in his Kingdom, and decline the Vinegar and Gall here given him? Doſt thou hope to be drawn up after him, and not

Joh 16. laſt.

not resolve here to tread the Wine-press of wrath, to endure the contradiction of sinners with him? If this thou lookest for, thou art on thy wander, far from thy Mark; thou art of the rich young mans pack, who would keep Christ and his Wealth too, or no Christ; *Crestianus es, non Christianus*; there is one thing necessary which thou needest, *Deny thy self, take up the Cross, and follow Christ*, to Mount *Calvary*, before thou come to Mount *Zion*.

And O that this Meditation were but canon with many such Zelots as *Julian* was, who grasp Power and worldly greatness with as eager tallons as Lions and Panthers do Lambs and Infants, and think they never have enough, till they have too much Mammon for Christ to cohabit with. These are they that are Saints, as *Peter* was a Penitent, after many denyals and perjuries; not Saints because penitent as was he, whom a Cock wakened; when these stop their eares against good counsel, and harden their hearts against reproof; yea, hate him that reproveth in the Gate. These are they who love Christ when he is with those in Princes Courts, cloathed in soft Rayment, sat in Royal Apparel on the Throne, when the people cry him up; but when he is traduced, when in the High Priests Hall, when trampled upon, then they are gone like Summer birds in Winter; they are all for a Pompous Reign on earth, before that more glorious Reign in Heaven; and therefore they will secure themselves by might and main against all danger and diminution here. Do these consider Christ had ne-

ver been glorious, but by sufferings, nor the Church been victorious but by the red Cross? How much of holy Writ do these men make Apocryphal, while they entail external prosperity to Saintship, and think none worthy to live, but those who look upon the Cross as a curse, *servile supplicium*? What think they of those words of the Lord Jesus, *In the world yee* (Who? my holy Apostles, as pure Saints as any such, none excepted; nay, to whom compared, those are but as Jewish Sepulchers) *shall have affliction*; not be afflicted, but *have affliction*, in the Abstract; there shall be a kind of connaturality betwixt you and affliction. What judge they of Saint *Pauls* peremptory position, *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shal suffer persecution*? What of Saint *Peters* prediction of fiery Tryals, and Encouragements to prepare for them? Nay, what of our Saviours Benediction on those that *suffer for Righteousnes sake*? Are these Tales and Figments? Are these Legends and Poysts? Are these Lilies of his field, not to be compared to the *Solomons* of their fancy in all his Royalty? I trow there is no man so fond, but sees self more set up then Christ in this Pageant; for take away sufferings, and where is Faith? where Charity? where Martyrdome? nay, where is, or to what purpose that animative reference of the Holy Ghost displaying Christ, glorious in witnessing a good confession before *Pontius Pilate* his Judg, who could wash his hand, and protest Christs innocency, and yet durst not deliver him from the rage of the multitude. No wonder they cry down Scripture, and Fathers, and Church Stories, who cry up such

wilde,

wild, excentrick, worldly subtilties for Religion, and own Christ with their mouthes, as the Jewes did him on the Crosse, only the more to reproach him.

Well, let these stray from the fold as wildly as they will, it is thy part (O holy soul) to keep close to thy colours; Christ looketh thou shouldst not only be ready to own, but of need be, to dye for him; thou must expect sorrows, perhaps not such as with *Spira* will make thee despair, turn thy back on God, as *Ephraim* did in the day of Battel; but such as may exercise thy Grace, correct thine outgoings, mind thee of thine end, admonish thee of thy duty, rouze thee to get thine Evidence ready, to make thy Calling and Election sure, and by a holy end prepare thee for a blessed Exchange.

Votivum Christianis erat pro Christi nomine gladio percuti. S. Hieron. in vita Pauli Eremitæ de Temp. Decii.

The Promise is to be secure, not exempt; not that yee shall not to be assaulted, but not be overcome; not that ye shall not be chastned, but that ye shall not be condemned; not that evils shall not come neer you, but that they shall not domineer over you; not that ye shall not be buffeted by Satan, but that Divine Grace shall be sufficient for you.

The Peace of God gained by Acquaintance with him, is no plea of prescription against trouble and evil; but this it doth, it modifies evil, so that it comes not noxiously neer a godly man, as it is evil, so its kept at distance, as it is a Mark of Divine love, as it is a voice to reclaim, as it is commanded to be Gods Monitor to us, so we must welcome it as did *David*, *It is good for me that I was afflicted*; and pray for it as preventive Physick, that keeps us from Plethorick

rick Distempers. Many men may thank God for their crosses, without which they had never come to Heaven: there is a most notable Story in the Legend, of a blind woman, who besought Saint *Bridget* to give her sight; the Saint (so called) at her intreaty, did; and when she had seen four dages, she desired Saint *Bridget*, that she would take away her sight again, adding this for reason, *The more I see of the world, the less am I conversant with Christ.*

Quo præsentior sum mundo, eo absentior sum Christo.

4. Lastly, The peace in Acquaintance with God, will keep thee from the Evil of Evils, *Death eternal.* God suffers not his to fall into that pit, out of which there is no redemption; His, as they have no part in the sin of the Damned, so shall they not partake in the torment of the Damned: 'Tis not, *Go ye Blessed*, but *Go ye Cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Divel and his Angels.* And indeed, this is the Mercy of Mercies; this is one part of the Recompence of Vertue and Godly life, that it shall not only have comfort in seeing God gloriously waving the Banner of love over it, but becoming its Guard to Heaven, and nullifying Satans attempts on it; this is, that in which the mercy of God shines as at noon tide, and comfortably exalts its self above Justice, as that which crowns God, and renders him Beloved and admired of all that know him.

But perhaps (O man) thou art curious to know what this Death Eternal is? This is a vanity, and if thou beware not, may be the vexation of thy spirit, but if thou wouldest ken the scantling of it, our blessed Lord hath defined it to be *utter darkness, where is weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.*

Matth. 8. 12.

teeth; it is exile from God, and judgment to the ſociety of damned ſpirits, for ever.

Death Eternal, what is it not that is abſolute triſticity? it is a living death, and a dying life; it is the wages of ſin, the ſentence of Juſtice, the utmoſt period of Plagues; a moſt exquiſite miſery, a moſt Mercileſs Torment, an Eternal Paſſion! *Eternal Death*; it is miſery to the eye, for it ſhall not ſee God; it is a worm gnawing on the heart, for it ſhall conſider the evil it hath done, for which is inflicted that evil it ſuffereth; it is a vexation to the ſenſes, which to augment the tortures of their condition, ſhal be renewed and made more ſenſible; it is an exceſs which ſhall never have end, but be eternally what it is, and impoſſible to be what it is not.

Death Eternal; it is the region of Blaſphemy, the Caldron of *Nimrods*, *Nero's Judaſſes*, thoſe chambers of ruine into which they deſcend, who deſert God by ſin, and are deſerted by God in juſt Judgment. *Death Eternal*; it is a gulfe without bottom; a doom beyond ranſome; a fire that burnes, and is never extinguiſhed; and a reſtleſs craver, never ſatisfied.

What ſhall I ſay other then that of the Pſalmiſt, *Remember this yee that frrget God, leſt he tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver.* Pſal. 50. 22.

Theſe are the Evils from which peace in Acquaintance with God priviledgeth the ſoul.

But how (cries the holy ſoul) *cometh this to be my priviledge*? How, O ſoul? Surely not by thy merit, but 1. By the *Mercy of God*; which hath beſtowed that good, as an Enticement to be his; God invites

vites ſinners to his Mercy. He *waites to be gracious*, he would have them *come to the waters of Life and drink freely*; he calls to you to come, *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden*; he rewards them when they come, *Thoſe that come unto me, I will in no ſort caſt away*; he complains of them when they do not come, *They will not come unto me that they might have life.* God in goodneſs begins with man, and gives him co-operating Grace; and it is his own obduration that makes Mercy retreat; while we are willing he aſſiſts us, but *when we draw back, he will have no pleaſure in us.* Mercy makes the Marriage betwixt God and the Soul, and Peace is the Dowry that God gives his Beloved; thoſe that are one with him by Grace cannot be ſever'd from him and themſelvs through Evil. Here is the beſt Exchange for profit, here is the *Indies* of holy Riches, here is *Canaan* flowing with Milk and Honey, here is the light which admits no darkneſs, and the day that never ſees night. here is the Price and the Pearle, the work, and the wages: God to whom by faith we muſt run, and Mercy, which by faith from him we may receive; here is the door by which we muſt enter into the joy of our Maſter; and here is the Maſter, who will not ſhut the door againſt us, becauſe we come not before bid, nor can we ſtay there longer then welcome. By thee, O Sun of the Morning, and firſt born of Heaven (for thou waſt in the beginning) is our Acquaintance wrought with God, and our evil from ſin prevented.

2. This comes to be the holy ſouls priviledg, from the *Purchaſe of Chriſt*; He, he redeemed us, not only from our *vain converſation*, but from the

wrath

wrath to come; from the *bondage of sin and Satan, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God*: 'Tis he that is *our Peace*, and 'tis he that *keeps us from that Evil one*. The Redemption wrought by him on the Cross, was not only from wrath, but to himself: *He hath redeemed us to himself out of every Nation*, &c. Not only to free us from the rage of sin and Satan, but to *make us Kings and Priests*, to *preserve us to his Heavenly Kingdome*; *and herein he is a Saviour to the utmost*; to the *utmost of men*: he is the Saviour of his whole body, Jewes, Gentiles, far, neer, bond, free, rich, poor, high, low, his Providence is over his whole family; his rain rains upon bad as well as good. To the *utmost of things*, all co-operate by his interposition and ordination, to the good of his; the Graces of Godly men make them admire him; the sins of others to watch over themselves more; nay, their own failings carry them to God by Petition for pardon and grace sufficient for them; the crosses they carry have Christ in them, the reproaches they suffer have Christ with them, the glory they aim at, Christ will bring them to; Life, which so many is a pleasure, Christ imbitters, and yet rescues them from any provocation to impatience: they use it as the time wherein to work, but they desire to be dissolved in Christs time, *For to be with him is best of all*. To the *uttermost of time*: his merit is a light unextinguishable, was, is, and ever shall be: the Patriarks before, the Prophets in, the holy men after the Law got to Heaven upon this wing, in this Chariot were they thither transported, in the garment of this elder brother were they wrapped, for that only is the Wedding garment;

Gal. 3. 13. Rom. 8. 21. Ephes 2. 14.

Rev. 5. 9, 10.

Hebr. 7. 25.

This

This is the one and only way; narrow, not open to all, but to those that believe; but yet a sure way, bounded by the sure mercies of *David*; and herein he is a Saviour beyond all, a Superlative Redeemer, for he is eternal, whereas others are but Temporary; he is complete, whereas others are but partial. Where are *Moses* and *Joshuah*, *David* and *Jeptha*, who saved the *Jewes*? Where *Cæsar*, *Scipio*, *Metellus* the Deliverers of the *Romanes*? Where *Codrus*, *Themistocles*, *Photion*, by whom the *Greeks* were delivered? These are dead, and their Territories by others possessed; nay, their ashes are become the prey of Tyrants, who glut themselves with revenges on their relicts: but Christ is the Saviour of his body, the Church; for ever he is, and ever will be the light in the midst of it, and a wall of fire round about it; For Christ hath purchased its peace, and paid (with reverence be it conceived) for that interest in God, which will keep off evil from coming to his.

3. This priviledg from evil is the natural child of Acquaintance with God; God never gives himself, without all that is his; and if all, then his peace, then his protection from evil; the Prophet tels us of Gods speaking *peace to his people*; of his connsels to them to *enter into rest till the indignation be over*; of his cordial, *Fear not thou worm Jacob, I will be with thee*: of his corrasive to wicked men whom *he will destroy*. And whence (O holy soul) comes all this, but from that proximity twixt God and the soul? This is the pay of our patience, the result of our fidelity to God; he that *follows the Lamb*, shal not miss his *white stone and new name*.

Psal. 85. 8.
Isai. 26. 20.
41. 14.
Psal. 145. 20

Rev. 2. 17.

God

God never dismisses his without a blessing, like that from the womb of the Morning; he gives them peace to poyse them here amidst their many storms in this life, and he keeps evil far from them; yea, that which is the greatest evil, after their deaths, eternal evil.

And now me thinks I am of S. *Peters* mind on the Mount, *It is good to be here*: here are three words in this Scripture, like the three Tabernacles in that; Acquaintance with God, Peace and Protection from evil; and these are (as Christs face was transfigured) in a sort seraphickly expressed, and proposed after a celestial method; here is Acquaintance; usually *res doloris*, a vanity of vanity, in the multitude of which there is sorrow and distraction, strangely meliorated by its adjunct, highly imbeautied by its entail to God, of a Ceremony and a necessity made a virtue; *Acquaint thy self with God.* Next, here is the Lady Peace, not like that of the world, with *Rachel* mourning, with *Thamar* thrust out of doors after it hath served a turn; but like the Queens daughter, *glorious within*, as beloved of God, and beauteous without, as decked with the Needle work of external accommodations: Lastly, here is evil profligated and dismantled of its force; the Lion exungued, and the sting taken out of the Serpents tail, as an effect of divine bounty, and this by the Chimistry of God, who is able to bring good from evil.

What then remains to this Meditation, but to summon the last Quere to give in its verdict? And that is the season when this Acquaintance wth God is to be had, and these consequences obtained, in the Particle *now*, *Acquaint* [*now*] *thy self with God*, &c.

Now

Now: Season seasons every thing; the Wise man
Prov. 25. 12. said; *A word in season is like apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver*; a fair shew, but Metal upon Metal makes no Heraldry, but in a Picture will pass, and so will time pass, of which this *now* is a part, and the best part because present; *Acquaint now*
Now, when? in life, in the day of time, in the season of Mercy, in Youth, before time be not, thou go down into the grave, and be seen no more, yea, before thou be gathered to dust, and worms feed upon thy flesh.

Now; not anon: *Now*, lest sickness, age, death prevent anon, and thou have no time to groan for Peace, or cry for Mercy; our pardon is ever in danger, where our repentance is in debate.

Now: this is to be wise for thy self (O soul) for it only is in thy possession, what a day will bring forth thou knowest not, therefore hearken to Wisdoms voice, *while it is called to day*; delayes ought to be as past time, out of thy power, since to *work out now thy salvation with fear and trembling* is thy prudence.

Time hath no longer a race than a Creature hath, it is always on a swift Ebb, ere long it will be low water, and then where the tree falls, it must lye: and since time and tide stay for no man, O my soul do thou watch them, and take time to do thy task; eternity gives good wages. Remember
2 Tim. 4. 7. who said, *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, from henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness.*

Now: not at the sixth or last hour of the day, for it is not certain whether thou shalt live upon this hazard to receive the penny of Eternity, which

followes.

followes the orderly expence of time; but now, this inſtant, moment ſet to thy Tackling; the ſtorm is great and thy veſſel queaſie, and therefore put in to the next Habour: What thou doſt, do quickly, *For there is neither wiſdom nor ſtrength in the grave whither thou goeſt*, nor ever will be in thy power to untie thy chain of torments, or regain a loſt happineſs. Eccleſ. 9no.

Therefore (O my ſoul) receive thou this counſel with joy, and perfect it by holy induſtry, while thou haſt time, talents, and what may further help thee in this bleſſed Husbandry and Sacred Thrift. Look not upon the Lions in the way, the narrow paſſage to life eternal, the obloquies of men who will judge thee mopiſh, becauſe thou laboureſt for that Jewel that thou haſt loſt, and wouldſt find again. Theſe diſcouragements may work on lazy and thriftleſs ſouls, who *ſtarve when there is bread enough in their fathers houſe*: follow thou the Saints of all ages, who by Faith and Patience inherit the Promiſes; and by their holy example be thou ſtimulated to take the Croſs for thy Title to the Crown of Life; yea, conteſt thou for their Crown, not to rob them, but to right thy ſelf, who art born to equal hopes with them: and comfort thy ſelf in that promiſe of the holy Apoſtle (who is now at peace with God, and is taken from the evil of this world unto the glory above) *In due time ye ſhall reap if you faint not.* Gal. 6. 9.

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